

From: Gentry, George
Sent: Thursday, September 06, 2012 1:44 PM
To: Gentry, George
Subject: Cal Fire firefighter threatened
Marijuana grower threatens firefighter with shotgun
By Linda Williams/TWN Staff Writer The Willits News
Posted:

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A CalFire firefighter battling the North Pass Fire was threatened by a man with a shotgun last Thursday while mopping up fires in the Blands Cove area. The firefighter left the area immediately, and Mendocino County sheriff's deputies moved in to locate the culprit.

The CalFire firefighter was driving a CalFire truck and was dressed in firefighting gear inside the mandatory evacuation zone along Blands Cove Road. While firefighters in this county frequently come upon marijuana gardens in their routine duties, they typically ignore them and go about their duties. The firefighter, followed protocol and went about his fire suppression duties.

The firefighter continued his fire suppression efforts until he was approached by a man driving a vehicle directly up to him, according to police reports. The man in the vehicle told the firefighter to leave the area immediately. The firefighter attempted to explain he was on official firefighting business, but the man in the vehicle continued to insist the firefighter leave. When the man looked down into his lap in a threatening manner, the firefighter's gaze followed the look, spotting the shotgun aimed directly at him, say police.

The firefighter told police he feared for his life and immediately left the area to summon help.

Deputies searched the mandatory evacuation zone and located a man and vehicle at a residence. The man admitted to confronting the firefighter, say police. He also told police he was growing marijuana and decided to stay at the residence despite the evacuation order.

Veda Bennett-Swank, 21, of Santa Rosa, was arrested on suspicion of brandishing a firearm in a threatening manner, interfering with a firefighter at a fire and issuing criminal threats. He is being held on \$20,000 bail and is scheduled for arraignment Wednesday.

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